disposal of distillery effluents into inland surface wafer is 30 miligram per litre as was earlier notified in 1987. Earlier, the distillery effluent was allowed to be used after primary treatment for irrigation purposes. This provision has been withdrawn vide notification in April 1996, to avoid any adverse impacts on surface and ground water.

(b) to (d). A research project has been assigned to the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) to ascertain the effects of distillery effluent on crops/land/ ground water due to such effluents for irrigation purposes. The finding are awaited.

Procurement Policy

589. SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH :
DR. RAMAKRISHNA KUSMARIA :

Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government would review the procurement policy keeping in view the less procurement of foodgrains particularly wheat;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the time likely to be taken in this regard; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (c). The procurement policy of the government has several components like minimum support price, quality specifications, imposition of levy on millers/ traders etc. While no major shift in the procurement policyunder the minimum support price operations is contemplated, keeping in view the relevant factors, the minimum support price of wheat for the 1996-97 rabi crop, to be marketed in the 1997-98 rabi marketing season, has been increased by Rs.35, from Rs.380 to Rs.415 per quintal. It is expected that this attractive increase in the MSP will enthuse the farmers to produce more wheat.

Reservation for Dalit Christians

590. SHRI BIR SINGH MAHATO :
SHRI P.C. THOMAS :

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to refer the reply given on July 25, 1996 in reply to Unstarred Question No. 1796 and state:

(a) whether the Government of India have decided to extend the reservation benefits to the Dalit Christians; and

(b) If not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) and (b). Scheduled Caste converts to Christianity are at present eligible for reservation benefits applicable to OBCs by virtue of their inclusion in the Central lists of OBCs in relation to twelve States/UTs. The matter of recognition of Scheduled Caste Converts to Christianity as Scheduled Castes is under consideration. Such recognition would entitle them to reservation benefits applicable to the Scheduled Castes.

Milk Production in Kerala

591. SHRI T. GOVINDAN : Will the Minister of ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any scheme for Central and World Bank assistance to increase the milk production in Kerala keeping in view the gap between production and requirement of the milk; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH) : (a) and (b). Kerala state was covered under the Operation Flood II & III projects which were implemented as a central sector Plan scheme with the assistance of the World Bank and the DEO. There is also a North Kerala Dairy Project that is being implemented with the assistance of the Swiss Development Corporation.

High Level Review Committee

592. DR. ARVIND SHARMA : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to Unstarred Question No.2124 replied on July 30, 1996 and state :

(a) whether the High Level Review Committee has since taken any decision according to the terms of reference laid down therein;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof;

(c) the time by which a final decision is likely to be taken in this regard;

(d) whether Government propose to give these awards from the ensuing Republic Day or Independence Day; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (e). The High Level Review Committee, constituted to go into the guidelines for the Padma Awards and certain